



**Breastfeeding? THC gets
in breastmilk and may affect
your baby.**



Saint Mary's Hospital
Trinity Health

Marijuana and Breastfeeding

Consuming marijuana, in any form (smoking, vaping, eating or drinking), **is not recommended** while breast-feeding your baby.

How will marijuana affect my baby?

- The active ingredient in marijuana, THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), is passed through your breastmilk and may affect your baby. Everything a mother eats, drinks or smokes enters breastmilk.
- "Pumping and dumping" your breastmilk does NOT work. THC is stored in fat cells and is released slowly over several weeks, so it stays in your breastmilk.
- Second hand smoke can also affect your baby by entering his/her lungs.
- Just like cigarette smoking, using marijuana may increase your baby's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Exposing your baby to marijuana through your breastmilk may cause your baby to have poor weight gain, increased sleepiness, and slower development.
- Marijuana use may impair a mother or care giver's judgment and ability to care for the baby.

No amount of marijuana is safe

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that mothers who are breastfeeding their babies should not use marijuana.
- The CDC suggests that breastfeeding mothers should reduce or avoid marijuana use. Data on the effects of marijuana exposure is limited.
- Even though marijuana is legal, it is not safe for your breastfeeding baby.

1. As of July 1, 2021 under Connecticut State law, recreational use of marijuana became legal. "Adults 21 and older will be able to possess up to 1.5 ounces on their person and have 5 ounces in a locked container in the home or locked trunk or glove compartment in the person's vehicle. The new bill prohibits smoking of marijuana in state parks, workplaces, hotels and within 25 feet of an entrance."

2. 211ct.org (2021). Connecticut's Legalized Recreational Marijuana (Cannabis) Law. <https://www.211ct.org/connecticuts-legalized-recreational-marijuana-cannabis-law>

3. Link here to Governor Lamont's Press Release with additional information and a link to the Senate Bill 1201: <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2021/06-2021/Governor-Lamont-Signs-Bill-Legalizing-and-Safely-Regulating-Adult-Use-Cannabis>

Marijuana Use in Pregnancy

How will using marijuana affect me?

Marijuana is a drug that changes the way you think and make decisions. It also can cause harmful effects to your body. These changes include:

- Poor judgment
- Dizziness
- Less oxygen when you breathe
- Permanent lung injury from smoking/vaping
- Increase risk for Preeclampsia

These problems may put you at risk for injury, which can also mean danger for your baby.

If you are using marijuana to help with nausea or vomiting during pregnancy or mental health issues, there are other safer alternative medications that your healthcare provider can prescribe during pregnancy.

How will using marijuana affect my baby?

We are still learning exactly what happens to babies when their mothers use marijuana. At this point, we know that marijuana may cause:

- Higher risk of pre-term (early) birth, stillbirth, and low birth weight
- Problems with the baby's brain developing before birth
- Behavioral issues and difficulty in school during childhood

What happens if I test positive for marijuana?

Because marijuana can be dangerous for you, your baby, and any children at home, there are state laws in place to help keep your whole family safe. Some of these laws involve reporting drug use to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Reportable incidents include:

- Having a positive drug test during pregnancy
- Having a positive drug test if you have any children at home

Reporting does not mean your children will be removed; it means the DCF may look into your home life to be sure you and your family are safe.

After a positive marijuana test, we will continue to test your urine each trimester and with each hospital admission (for example, when you come to Labor & Delivery), or if you request it on your own. Our goal is to achieve a negative test result to ensure the best for you and your baby.

How can I get help to quit using marijuana?

Just ask us for help! Let your medical assistant, nurse, or OB provider know that you're trying to quit, and we'll get you in touch with one of our social workers. You can also:

- Visit www.samhsa.gov for resources and more information
- Visit www.acog.org/patients/faqs/marijuana-andpregnancy for more information